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Reading the Book of Nature [Review of Globalization and Multicultural Ministry: A Teilhardian Vision by David John Ayotte]

Citation for published version:

Grumett, D 2015, 'Reading the Book of Nature [Review of Globalization and Multicultural Ministry: A Teilhardian Vision by David John Ayotte]', *Expository Times*, vol. 126, no. 11, pp. 555.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0014524615579982a>

Digital Object Identifier (DOI):

[10.1177/0014524615579982a](https://doi.org/10.1177/0014524615579982a)

Link:

[Link to publication record in Edinburgh Research Explorer](#)

Document Version:

Peer reviewed version

Published In:

Expository Times

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READING THE BOOK OF NATURE

David John Ayotte, SJ, *Globalization and Multicultural Ministry: A Teilhardian Vision* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist, 2012. \$29.95. pp. 208. ISBN: 978-0-8091-4816-5).

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin maintained close links with his fellow Jesuit Henri de Lubac, who after Teilhard's death became a key expositor of his theology and corrector of misinterpretations. This book brings the two together in a new way. De Lubac also spent time expounding the medieval doctrine of the 'four senses' of scripture, and David Ayotte applies this doctrine hermeneutically to Teilhard's theology. Of course, Teilhard's evolutionary context already locates revelation within a temporal process rather than presenting it as completed in a single event. However, suitably emboldened by Paul's endorsement of allegory (Gal. 4.24), Ayotte goes further by discerning the whole of modern biological, evolutionary and globalized reality through scripture's four senses.

Beginning with the literal sense, Ayotte attends to globalization's visible manifestations—technological, social, political, economic and religious—and combines these into an historical narrative based on the idea of convergence. The next sense unfolded is allegory, which relates globalized reality to the action of Christ, on whom the consistence and purpose of the whole of nature depend. Ayotte then turns to the moral sense, deploying the concepts of personhood, action and love within an overarching vision of ethics not as moral problem-solving but as spiritual formation. The final sense is the eschatological, in which present reality is seen as contingent and as directed towards its final completion in Christ, who is its transcendent 'Omega' or end point and only true source of perfection.

This study is not straightforwardly about ministry in a globalized world. However, it is valuable for two reasons. First, one of the accusations levelled against Teilhard is that all he offers in response to the world's concrete problems is vague metaphysical speculation. However, Ayotte places the poor, the scarred and the dispossessed at the centre of his account, showing how the comprehensiveness of Teilhard's vision and the correspondence posited between centre and periphery in fact imbue local concrete particularity with intense, universal significance. Ayotte and fellow Jesuits, working in some of the globe's most marginal communities, are inspired in their ministry by Teilhard. The study is also valuable because Ayotte does not read and appraise Teilhard's cosmology as a merely literal description that may be proven or dismissed by scientific evidence. This it certainly is not. Rather, Teilhard offers a theological vision grounded in the conviction that God is at work in all dimensions of reality.

DAVID GRUMETT

School of Divinity, University of Edinburgh